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A Sermon for the times  
by  
Rev. Edwin M. Wheelock.  
Boston, 1859.

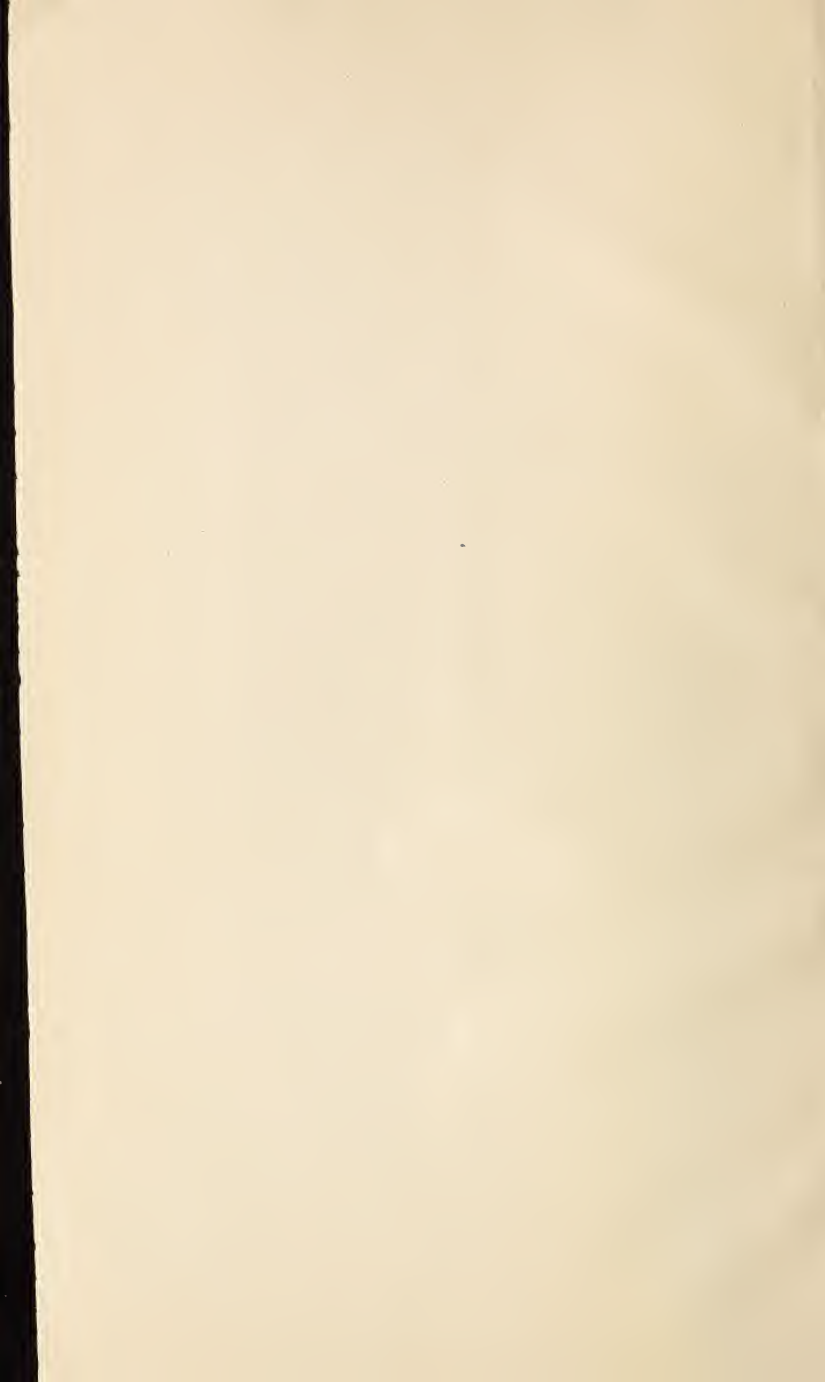




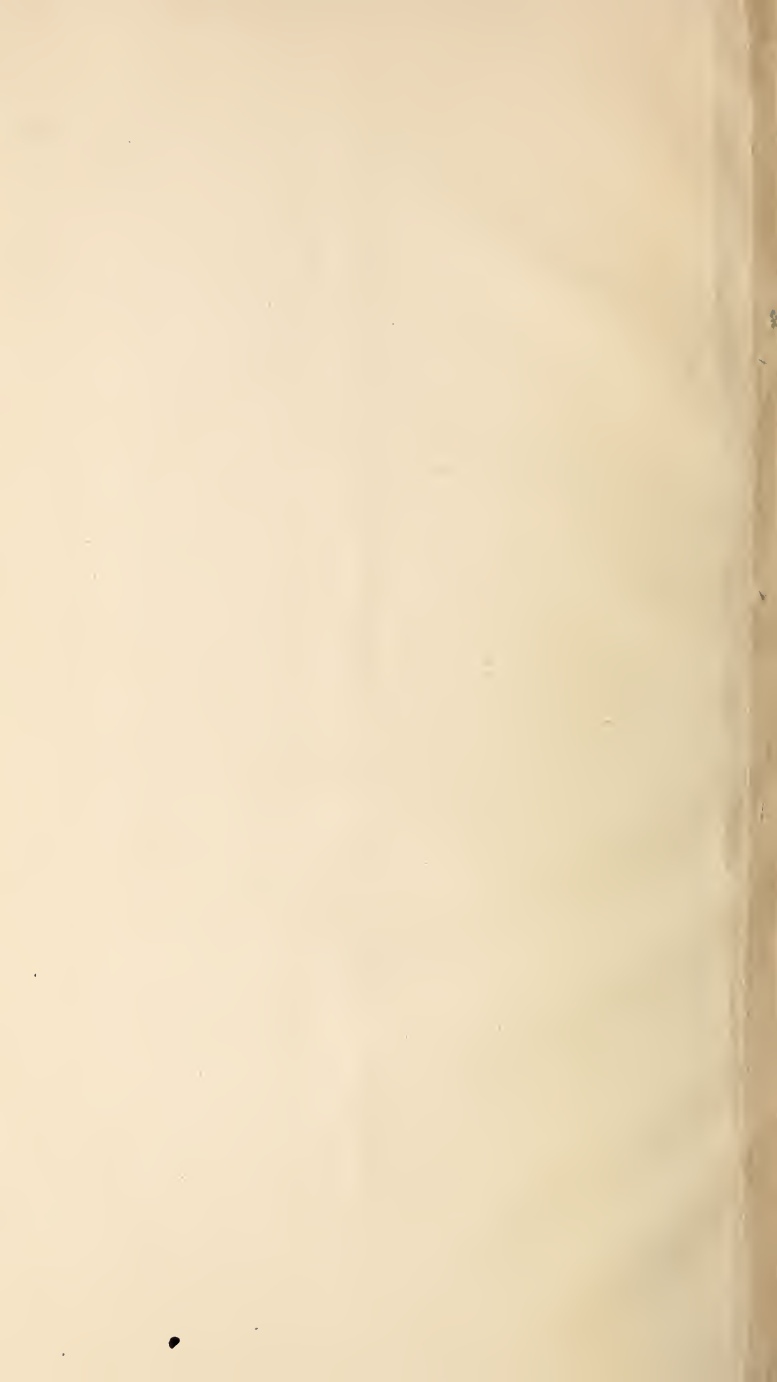
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HARPER'S FERRY AND ITS LESSON.

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A SERMON

FOR THE TIMES.

BY

REV. EDWIN M. WHEELLOCK

OF DOVER, N. H.

PREACHED AT THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1859.

SECOND EDITION.

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## S E R M O N .

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"And all men mused in their hearts of *John*, whether he was the Christ or not."—Luke iii. 15.

IN the grand march of civilization, there has been in every generation of men since time began, some one enterprise, some idea, some conflict, which is representative.

These are marked places on the world's map in token that something was then settled. That then and there mankind chose between two opposing modes of thought and life, and made an upward or downward step on that stairway which is bottomed on the pit, and reaches to the Throne. These places are always battles of some sort — often defeats. Paul on Mars Hill; Luther nailing his theses to the church door; Columbus on the quarter-deck of the *Santa Maria*; Cromwell training his iron-sides; Joan d'Arc in the flames; Faust bending over his types. Such as these are the focal points of history, round which all others cluster and revolve. Uncounted myriads of events take place, and uncounted myriads of men take part in them, but only one or two contain meat and meaning. Each of these is built into the solid walls of the world. Such an object is the man and his deed at Harper's Ferry. It strikes the hour of a new era. It carries American history on its shoulders. The bondsman has stood face to face with his Moses. The Christ of anti-slavery

has sent forth its "John" and forerunner. The solemn exodus of the American slave has begun.

When the national sin of Egypt had grown enormous and extreme, THE SPIRIT made its first appeal to the conscience, — the moral instinct, — the religious sense of the offending people. To the government, incarnate in Pharaoh, these solemn words were slowly thundered:—"Thus saith the Lord, let my people go that they may serve me. I have surely seen the affliction of my people, and have heard their cry, and I am come down to deliver them. I know the oppression whereby they are oppressed, and have heard their sorrow." And when the nation had shown itself hardened in inhumanity and sin, and every moral and spiritual appeal had been vainly made, then we read that the "Lord plagued Egypt." The chalice of agony they had so foully forced upon their forlorn brethren, was pressed to their own lips, and the slaveholders yielded to terror what they had brazenly denied to justice and right.

This is the record of slavery always and everywhere. Never yet in the history of man was a tyrant race known to loosen its grasp of the victim's throat, save by the pressure of force. Those mistaken friends of the slave, who so earnestly deprecate and condemn that "war cloud no larger than a man's hand" which has just broken over Virginia, and who teach, through pulpit and press, that the American bondmen can only reach freedom through purely moral and peaceable means, would do well to remember that never yet, never yet in the experience of six thousand years, have the fetters been melted off from a race of slaves by means purely peaceable and moral. And let those who say that four millions of our people can only gain the rights of manhood through the consent of one quarter of a million who hourly rob and enslave

them, not forget that compulsory laws, or the wrath of insurrection alone, has ever forced that consent and made the slave-owner willing. Ah! this base prejudice of caste, this scorn of a despised race because of their color; how it infects even our noblest minds!

Those eloquent men who, four years ago, when the faint, far-off shadow of slavery fell upon *white* men in Kansas, sounded far and wide the Revolutionary gospel, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," and who called Sharpe's rifles a "moral agency;" now, when the same "moral agency," in the hands of the same men, is battling in a cause far more devoted and divine, preach the soft southside notes of submission and peace which slavery loves so well to hear.

Could that be right in '55 which is so shockingly wrong in '59? Can inspiration become insanity as the skin shades from dark to pale? I believe there is a great truth in the doctrine of non-resistance; I consider it as perhaps the consummate and perfect flower of Christianity. But I also know that both the American Church and the American State have always rejected and derided that doctrine. They inculcate the duty of forcible resistance to aggression, of self-defence, of taking the life of offenders. They have no right to prescribe to forty hundreds of thousands of our nation a line of duty they reject for themselves. In celebrating Bunker Hill, the right to condemn Harper's Ferry disappears. For more than half a century the Spirit of God has, through the religion, the conscience, the humane instincts, the heroic traditions of our land, been pleading with the American Pharaoh to let his people go. But in vain. Slavery was too potent for them all; now the "Plagues" are coming. John Brown is the first Plague launched by Jehovah at the head of this immense

and embodied wickedness. The others will follow, "and then cometh the end."

He is, like his namesake in Judea, not the "One that should come." He did not bring freedom to that crushed and trodden race, but he is the "Forerunner" — the voice in the slave wilderness, crying to a nation dead in trespasses and sins, "Repent, Reform, for the terrible kingdom of God is at hand."

His mission was to inaugurate slave insurrection as the divine weapon of the anti-slavery cause. The school of insurrection is the only school open to the slave. Robbery tabernacled in the flesh, has closed every other door of hope upon him. *This* it cannot close. Do we shrink from the bloodshed that would follow?

Ah! let us not forget that in slavery *blood is always flowing*. On the cotton, and sugar, and rice fields, more of our people are yearly slain by overwork and starvation, by the bludgeon and the whip, than fell at Waterloo! Is their blood "ditch-water?"

Is the blood of insurrection more terrible than the same blood shed daily by wicked hands on the plantation?

Good men who speak of the "crime of disturbing the peace of slavery by violence," speak of that which never can exist. Slavery knows no peace. Its primal condition of life is Humanity disarmed, dismembered, throttled. Its sullen calm is the peace of the vessel captured in the Malayan seas, when resistance has ceased, when the pirate knife presses against the throat of every prostrate man, and the women cower from a fate worse than death.

Its tranquil state is a *worse war* than the worst insurrection.

Slavery is a perpetual war against men, women and children, unarmed, helpless and bound. Insurrection is but a transient war, on more equal terms, and with the



weaker side capable at least of flight. Who can say that "the last state is worse than the first?" A true peace is indeed blessed. The peace that comes from knowing God, and loving God, and doing the will of God, — that is the most desirable.

But the peace of insensibility, the peace of stupefaction, the sleepy peace of the freezing body, that is not desirable. War is better than that: anything is better than that; for that is death. No tyrant ever surrenders his power, except under the rod. The terrible logic of history teaches that no such wrong was ever cleansed by rose-water. When higher agencies are faithless, evil is used by God to crowd out worse evils. The slave who vainly tries to shake off his fetters, is schooled by every such effort into fuller manhood. No race ever hewed off its chains except by insurrection.

Every nation now free, has graduated through that fiery school. The annals of our Saxon blood, from William of Normandy to William of Orange, is a record of insurrection, cloaked by history under the name of civil and religious wars. All our noble fathers were "traitors," Cromwell was a "fanatic," Washington the chief of "rebels." "Heaven," says the Arabian prophet, "is beneath a concave of swords."

Let us remember that four millions of our nation till the soil of the South, and that three hundred thousand persons hold them in robbers' bonds. But God has said, "The soil to him who tills it." And the North will be a furnace of insurrections till the "Right comes uppermost, and justice is done." The slave has not only a right to his freedom — it is his *duty* to be free. And every northern man has not only a right to help the slave to his freedom; it is his religious duty to help him, each choosing his own means. God help the slave to his freedom without shed-

ding a drop of blood ; but if that cannot be, then upon the felon soul that thrusts himself between God's image and the liberty to which God is ever calling him, upon *him*, I say, rests all the guilt of the fierce conflict that must follow. In the van of every slave insurrection marches "the angel of the Lord," smiting with plagues the oppressor, "till he lets the people go." God grant that the American Pharaoh may not harden his heart against the warnings of heaven, till, in the seven-fold flame of insurrection, the fetters of the bondsman shall be forged into swords.

But if that dread alternative should come, and freedom and slavery join in deathful duel, our duty still is plain. At once must the great North step between, either to prevent the struggle, if we can, or shorten it as best we may, by "breaking every yoke." Our Fathers thought that the Federal Constitution had given slavery its death blow. Jefferson thought the ordinance of 1787 had dug its grave. The men of 1808 believed that the destruction of the slave trade had dried up its fountains. The result has mocked them all. A half century has rolled by, and now it is smothering in terror and murder fifteen States, and throwing its dark shadow over all the rest. Is this to go on? John Brown said, No! and marched to Harper's Ferry. It is a great mistake to term this act the *beginning* of bloodshed and of civil war; never could there be a greater error. We have had bloodshed and civil war for the last ten years, yes, for the last ten years. The campaign began on the 7th of March, 1850.

The dissolution of the Union dates from that day, and we have had no constitution since. On that day Daniel Webster was put to death. Ah! and such a death! And from that time to this there has not been a month that has not seen the soil of freedom invaded, our citizens kidnapped, imprisoned, shot, or driven by thousands into



Canada. This once free North of ours has been changed into an American Coast of Guinea, where the slave-pirate of Virginia, with the President of these United States as his blood-hound, hunts his human prey as his brother-pirate on the negro coast hunts there. When the kidnappers on the African coast would capture a town, they surround it in the night, and steal the inhabitants under cover of the darkness.

But our largest cities have been again and again captured, in full daylight, and by a mere handful of negro-thieves; and their citizens stolen without even the snapping of a gun-lock. The proud city of Boston has been taken three times. I myself have seen two hundred thousand citizens, nearly two hundred police, and fifteen hundred well-armed soldiers, surrender without firing a shot, to about sixty marines, who held them all passive prisoners for ten days. And yet these were the children of men who started up revolutionists "the instant the hand of government was thrust into their pockets to take a few pence from them!" No, it is not true that the conflict of Harper's Ferry is the beginning of a civil war, — that would be like saying that the capture of Yorktown was the beginning of the revolutionary struggle. The meaning of that new sign is this. Freedom, for ten years weakly standing on the defensive, and for ten years defeated, has now become the assailant, and has now gained the victory.

The Bunker Hill of our second revolution has been fought, and the second Warren has paid the glorious forfeit of his life.

John Brown felt that to enslave a man is to commit the greatest possible crime within the reach of human capacity.

He was at war, therefore, with the slave system. He

felt that its vital principle was the most atrocious atheism, withholding the key of knowledge, abrogating the marriage relation, rending families asunder at the auction block, making the State that protects it a band of pirates, and the church that enshrines it a baptized brothel. He knew that the cause needed not talk, not eloquence, but action, life, principle walking on two feet. He had small faith in politics. He saw that the beau ideal of a democrat was one "that could poll the most votes with the fewest men." And that the object of republicanism, during the next year, would be to find the most available candidate for the Presidency. And he decided that the barbarism that holds in bloody chains four millions of our people, for the purposes of lucre and lust, "that makes every sixth man and woman in the country liable to be sold at auction; that forbids, by statute, every sixth man and woman in the nation to learn to read; that makes it an indictable offence to teach every sixth man and woman in the country the alphabet; that forbids every sixth man and woman in the nation to have a husband or wife, and that annihilates the sanctity of marriage by statute, systematically, and of purpose, in regard to one-sixth part of a nation calling itself Christian;" he decided, I say, that such a barbarism was, in itself, *an organized and perpetual war against God and man*, and could be best met by the direct issue of arms. For he was no sentimentalist, and no non-resistant.

He believed in human brotherhood, in George Washington, in Bunker Hill, and in a God, "all of whose attributes take sides against the oppressor." He startled our effeminacy with the sight of a man whose seminal principle was justice, whose polar star was right. No wonder he is awful to politicians. The idea which made our nation, which split us off from the British Empire, and deny-

ing which we begin to die,—the idea of the supreme sacredness of man, is speaking through his rifle and through his lips.

He was a Puritan on both sides; and that blood is always revolutionary. He had the blood of English Hampden, who, rather than pay an unjust tax of twenty shillings, began a movement that hurled a king from his throne to the block.

He had the blood of Hancock and Adams, who, when King George laid his hand on the American pocket, aroused every New Englander to be a revolution in himself.

He knew that the crimes of the slave faction against humanity were more atrocious by far than those which turned England into a republic, and the Stuarts into exile; and his glorious fault it was that he could not look calmly on while four millions of our people are trodden in the bloody mire of despotism.

It is the fashion now to call him a “crazy” fanatic; but history will do the *head* of John Brown the same ample justice that even his enemies give to his heart.

It is no impossible feat to plant a permanent armed insurrection in Virginia. The mountains are near to Harper’s Ferry, and within a few days march lies the Great Dismal Swamp, whose interior depths are forever untrodden save by the feet of fugitive slaves. A few resolute white men, harbored in its deep recesses, raising the flag of slave revolt, would gather thousands to their standard, would convulse the whole State with panic, and make servile war one of the inseparable felicities of slavery.

Let us not forget that three hundred half-armed Indians housed in similar swamps in Florida, waged a seven years’ war against the whole power of the United States, and were taken, at last, not by warfare, but by treachery and

bribes. A single year of such warfare would unhinge the slave faction in Virginia. Said Napoleon, when preparing for the invasion of England, "I do not expect to conquer England; but I shall do more,—I shall ruin it. The mere presence of my troops on her coast, whether defeated or not, will shake her government to the ground, and destroy her social system."

With equal correctness reasoned the hero and martyr of Harper's Ferry. He knew that slave revolt could be planted upon as permanent and chronic a basis as the Underground Railroad, and *that* once done, slavery would quickly bleed to death. His plan was not Quixotic. His means were ample. None so well as he knew the weakness of this giant sin. Had he avoided the Federal arm, he might have overrun the heaving, rocking soil of the fifteen States, breaking every slave chain in his way; while the "terrors of the Lord" were smiting to the heart of this huge barbarism, with one ghastly sense of guilt, and feebleness, and punishment.

We have seen the knees of a great slave State smiting together, and her teeth chattering with fear, while wild and craven panic spread far and wide, from the slight skirmish of a single day, with less than a score of men, and can judge somewhat of her position if insurrection had become an institution in her midst. If Brown had not, in pity to his prisoners, lingered in the captured town till beset by the Federal bayonets, he would now have been lodged in the mountains or swamps, while every corner of the State would have flamed with revolt. He did not "throw his life away;" he dies a "natural death,"—to be hung is the only natural death possible for a true man in Virginia. Did the farmers who stood behind the breastwork on Bunker Hill "throw away their lives?" Was Warren a "monomaniac?" Were the



eighty half-armed militia, who stood up at Lexington Green against the weight of a great monarchy, and "fired the shot heard round the world," all madmen?

Is death in a feather bed to be made the single test of sanity? Last year, the word insurrection affected even anti-slavery men with a shudder; next year, it will be uttered in every Northern Legislature, as a thing of course. Is that nothing? Pharaoh may sit for a while on the throne, but he sits *trembling*.

To hush the click of dollars, and the rustle of bank bills over the land, if only for an hour, that the still small voice of God's justice may be heard. Is the life thrown away that has done so much? Can our "sane" lives show a wealthier record? His scheme is no failure, but a solemn success. Wherein he failed his foes have come to his aid. the greatness of their fears reveals the extent of his triumph. John Brown has not only taken Virginia and Governor Wise, he has captured the whole slave faction, North and South. All his foes have turned abolition missionaries. They toil day and night to do his bidding, and no President has so many servants as he. The best Sharpe's rifle in all his band would scarcely throw a bullet a single mile, but in every corner of every township of thirty-three States, the press of the slave party is hurling his living and inspired words—words filled with God's own truth and power, and so more deadly to despotism than hosts of armed men.

The Spartan band of chivalry, fifteen hundred strong, quaking on the hills round Harper's Ferry, for a whole day, unable to look the old man in the face; then murdering a prisoner, unarmed and bound hand and foot, who could find in that shambles no man, and but one woman to vainly plead for his life; then blowing off the face of a man who cried for quarter; then hacking with seven



wounds the body of the gray haired leader *after he had yielded*; then before the eyes of the bereaved and bleeding father, crowding the body of his son into a "box for dissection;" then with obscene rage and threats insulting the aged chief as he lay wounded and manacled, upon his cot; the mock trial, overleaping with indecent haste the ancient forms of law; the hurried sentence, the mustering of hundreds of armed men, filling with horse, foot, and cannon, every avenue to his jail; the whole South on tiptoe with apprehension; two great States in an ecstasy of fear; Virginia turning herself into an armed garrison; the slave journals of the North shrieking in full concert. Behold on what a platform the insane rage and fear of his foes has lifted this anti-slavery veteran to the stars! Strangling John Brown will not stop the earthquake that has followed his shattering blow; or if it does, Science teaches us that when the earthquake stops the volcano begins. His aim was to render slavery insecure, and he has succeeded. "He has forced the telegraph, the press, the stump, the bar-room, the parlor, to repeat the dangerous story of insurrection in every corner of the South." From Maryland to Florida, there is not a slave who does not have the idea of Freedom quickened within him by the outbreak of Harper's Ferry. Like the Druid stone, which the united force of an hundred men could not move, while a child's finger rightly applied, rocked it to its base, this dark system of outrage and wrong, which has stood for thirty years moveless against the political power of the North, against the warnings of an insulted Christianity, and against the moral sentiment of the world, now rocks and trembles as the finger of this God-fearing Puritan presses against its weak spot. The fatal secret has now become public news. Invulnerable to all moral appeals, it yields, it dissolves, it *dies*, before the onset of force. Like the Swiss valleys,

the first clash of arms brings down the avalanche. From the martyrdom of Brown dates a new era of the anti-slavery cause. To moral agitation will now be added physical. To argument, action. The dispensation of doctrine will be superseded by the higher dispensation of fact. The appeals of the North will now be applied to the terrors as well as to the conscience of this Great Barbarism. Other devoted men will follow in the wake of Brown, avoiding his error, and will carry on to its full results the work he has begun. Slave propagandism we have had long enough. We are likely now to have some liberty propagandism.

I rejoice to see a man whose banner bears no uncertain sign. The North wants no more corn-stalk Generals, but a real General, one who is both platform and party in himself. He is a Crusader of Justice, a Knight Templar in Christ's holy war — a war which shall never cease but with the snap of the last chain link. His glory is genuine. Like that of Washington, it will stand the test of time. Of the American masses, he, and such as he, are the salt: and the sufficient answer to all criticism upon him is his example. But he was "defeated;" yes, and all first class victories, from that of Calvary downwards, are defeats. Such investments do not usually yield "semi-annual dividends." All God's angels come just as he comes: looking most forlorn, marked with defeat and death, "despised and rejected of men." True he "failed," but to him who works with God, failure, fetters, and public execution are kindly forces, and all roads lead him on to victory.

He had a live religion. He believed that God spake to him in visions of the night. Yes, incredible as it may seem, this man actually believed in God! Why, he must have been "mad!" While ecclesiastics mourn a "suspense

of faith," and teach that the only way to cleanse America from her sins is to instantly dress up the church in a second-hand uniform and cocked hat, this saint of the broad church did not take up the "slop trade," nor cry "old clo'" in the court of Zion. He was at his apostolic work, "casting out devils." Clearly the "suspense of faith" had not reached *him*. It was the doctrine of John Brown that we should interfere with the slaveholders to rescue the slave. I hope no anti-slavery man will have the weakness to apologize for, explain, or deny such a self-evident truth. He could not see that it was heroic to fight against a petty tax on tea, and endure seven years warfare for a political right, and a crime to fight in favor of restoring an outraged race to those Divine birthrights of which they had been for two centuries robbed.

He knew that every slave, on every plantation, has the right from his God and Creator to be free, and that he could not devote his life to a nobler aim than to forward their freedom. Every one feels that it is noble. Any man with the golden rule before him should be ashamed to say less than this. He is true to the logic of Lexington and Concord, and no American is so loyal to the meaning of the Fourth of July as he. He is one of God's nobility who had outgrown selfish and private aims. And his last act is so brave and humane that politicians stand aghast, one party shrieking as if noise was "the chief end of man;" while the other protests with both hands upraised "we didn't help them do it." Of course they didn't, it is n't in them.

Ah, the principle of the Declaration of '76 is utterly dying out of our minds. It is boldly sneered at as "a glittering generality" by some, and disregarded by all. There is to-day not a State, not a party, not a religious sect in the nation that accepts that Declaration:— only



one old man in a Southern prison dares believe in it. The cause of human liberty in this land needs speeches and prayers, eloquence and money; but it has now on the banks of the Potomac, for the *second* time, found what it needed more than these; what the Hebrew Exodus found in Moses; what Puritan England hailed in Oliver Cromwell; what revolutionary France has sought in vain — A MAN!

And let no one who glories in the revolutionary struggles of our fathers for their freedom, deny the right of the American bondsman to imitate their high example. And those who rejoice in the deeds of a Wallace or a Tell, a Washington or a Warren; who cherish with unbounded gratitude the name of Lafayette for volunteering his aid in behalf of an oppressed people, in a desperate crisis, and at the darkest hour of their fate, cannot refuse equal merit to this strong, free, heroic man, who has freely consecrated all his powers, and the labors of his whole life, to the help of the most needy, friendless, and unfortunate of mankind.

The picture of the Good Samaritan will live to all future ages, as the model of human excellence, for helping one whom he chanced to find in need.

John Brown did more. He went to *seek* those who were lost that he might save them. He a fanatic! He a madman! He a traitor! Yes, and the fanatics of this age are the star-crowned leaders of the next. And the madmen of to-day are the heroes of to-morrow.

It is we who have committed treason, we who here in America, roofed over with the Declaration of Independence, turn more people into merchandise than existed here, when our fathers made that solemn declaration; we, who claim that the right to buy and sell men and women is as sacred as the right to buy and sell horses; we, who

build our national temple on the profaned birthrights of humanity, the Fugitive Slave Bill being the chief corner stone. But this "traitor" is Live America, and carries the Declaration of '76 in his heart. I think the time is fast coming when you will be forced to do as he has done. You will be obliged to do it by the inroads of slavery upon your own liberties and rights. What you are not brought into by conscience, you will be shamed into, and what you are not shamed into, you will be driven into by the slaveholders themselves. Slavery will neither let peace, nor liberty, nor the Union stand.

A few years more will roll away, this tyranny steadily marching forward, till the avalanche comes down upon you all, and you will be obliged to take the very ground on which stands this high-souled and devoted man.

Editors and Politicians call him mad, and so he is — to them. For he has builded his manly life of more than three score years upon the faith and fear of God, a thing which Editors and Politicians, from the time of Christ till now, have always counted as full proof of insanity.

One such man makes *total* depravity impossible, and proves that American greatness died not with Washington.

The gallows from which he ascends into heaven will be in our politics what the cross is in our religion — the sign and symbol of supreme self-devotedness; and from his sacrificial blood the temporal salvation of four millions of our people yet shall spring. It takes a whole geological epoch to form the one precious drop we call diamond; and a thousand years of Saxon progress, every step of which has been from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake, have gone to the making of this shining soul. That Virginia scaffold is but the setting of the costly gem, whose sparkle shall light up the faces of an uncounted

army. When the old Puritan struck so stout a blow for the American slave, it rang on the fetters of thirty-three enslaved republics, where every foot of soil is lawful kidnapping ground, and where every man, white or black, holds his liberty at the will of a slaveholder, a commissioner or a marshal.

The only part of America which has been, in this generation, conquered for God, is the few square feet of land on which stood the engine-house at Harper's Ferry.

Carlyle somewhere says that a "rotten stump will stand a long time if not shaken." John Brown has shaken this stump of the old Barbarisms; it remains for us to tear out every root it has sent into the soil of the North. Unsupported by these, the next breath of insurrection will topple it to the ground.

Said the ancestors of this man two centuries ago to the Long Parliament, "If you want your laws obeyed, make them fit to be obeyed, and if not—Cromwell," and the devilism of England heard and trembled. Their child of to-day has but sounded forth the same idea, and the devilism of America trembles likewise.

It is fitting that he should die. He has done enough, and borne enough. One such example of self-forgetting heroism, sanctified by such tenderness and faith, meeting the eye and filling the heart of the civilized world, spreading its noble inspiration far and wide through a continent, quickening the pulses of heroism in a million souls, is God's prime benefaction to our time,—the immortal fire that keeps humanity's highest hopes aflame.

To lift a nation out of the ignoble rut of money-making, stagnation, and moral decay, Freedom has offered the blood of her noblest son, and the result is worth a thousand times the costly price.

On the second day of December he is to be strangled in a Southern prison, for obeying the Sermon on the Mount. But to be hanged in Virginia is like being crucified in Jerusalem,—it is the last tribute which sin pays to virtue.

John Brown realized the New Testament. He felt that he owed the same duty to the black man on the plains of Virginia that he did to his blood brother. This was his insanity.

He does not belong to this age ; he reaches back to the first three centuries of the Christian Church, when it was a proverb among the followers of Jesus, “No good Christian dies in his bed.” Their fanaticism was his fanaticism. Hear his words to the slave court which tried him for his life, without giving him time to obtain counsel whom he could trust, and while he was partially deaf from his wounds, and unable to stand on his feet : “Had I interfered in this manner in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great,—or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, wife, or child, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this enterprise, it would have been all right. Every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward. This court acknowledges, too, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed, which I suppose to be the Bible, which teaches me that ‘all things whatsoever that men should do to me, I should do even so to them.’ It teaches me further, to ‘remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.’ I tried to act up to that instruction. I say that I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to interfere as I have done in behalf of his despised poor, I did no wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life, and mingle my

blood with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave land, whose rights are disregarded by wicked laws, I say, let it be done." Ah, friends, how near is that land to moral ruin where such men are counted "mad!" Virginia that day doomed to death her best friend. He who would have saved her from falling some day by the hands she has manacled.

"I know full well that were I a slave and miserable, forbidden to call my wife, my child, my right arm, my own soul, my own; liable to be chained, and whipped, and sold, the voice that should speak Freedom to me would be holier in its accents than the music of hymn and cathedral, as sacred as the voice of an angel descending from God.

"In the eye that should be turned on me with rescue and help, a light would beam before which the shine of the sun would grow dim.

"The hand that should be stretched out to smite off my chains, it would thrill me like the touch of Christ. In his most blessed name, what on earth have his followers to do, what are they here for, if not to fly to the help of the oppressed, to maintain the holy cause of human freedom, and to stand out the unyielding opponents of outrage and wrong?"

And this, my friends, is the sacred, the radiant "Treason" of John Brown. God bless him and all such traitors, say I, and let the Great North respond Amen.

The State that has parted with the bones of the dead Washington, and that has, long since, parted with the last shred of his principles, may now fittingly put the living Washington to death; but after all, it is but little that the rage of man can do.

There is one above greater than Virginia, and across the obscene roar of the slave power comes His voice, sounding in the ears of that scarred and manacled old man, "Inas-



much as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." And again, "He that loseth his life for my sake, *shall find it again.*"

Yet a few days, and the bells of New England will toll for her departed hero ; not slain, but made immortal.

He goes to the Puritan heaven of his free forefathers. He leaves with us two sacred trusts ; his inspired example, preaching to all, "Go thou and do likewise ;" and the bereaved families, whose husbands and fathers have fallen while fighting our battle.

God help us to be faithful to these trusts, and to be true to John Brown's life and example.













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